

CHAPTER RECAP

Now that you understand the fundamentals of a television script, let's break down Shonda's pilots for *Grey's Anatomy* and *Scandal*. Follow along with Shonda by downloading the pilot scripts for both shows, which she has made available for her MasterClass students. Use the act breakdown worksheets on the following pages to jot down the beats and deconstruct each of the episodes. Here are some points to keep in mind that Shonda advises for your own scripts:

- ▶ Think about setting, not in terms of geographical location, but in terms of place. The pilot of *Grey's Anatomy* begins in Meredith's mother's home, a symbolic and intimate setting for the character.
- ▶ Pick or create a character that can act as a guide for the audience, like Quinn in *Scandal*.
- ▶ Strive for an exciting opening that makes people lean in.
- ▶ Think of the most extreme thing that can happen to your characters, make it happen, and go from there.
- ▶ Ground your story choices in character; you'd be surprised how much the audience will let you get away with when it's motivated by character.
- ▶ Avoid clichés. If you've seen or heard it before, don't use it.
- ▶ Think carefully about your characters' dialogue. If your characters have a previous relationship before meeting in the pilot, don't write their dialogue as if they are speaking to each other for the first time.
- ▶ Know your characters' secrets before you start writing, even if you're not going to reveal them in the pilot.
- ▶ Think about your act breaks and plan them ahead of time. These plot pushers need to be planted, built, and eventually pay off.

NOTES

CASE STUDY: GREY'S ANATOMY PILOT

ACT 1	ACT 2	ACT 3	ACT 4	ACT 5

CASE STUDY: SCANDAL PILOT

ACT 1	ACT 2	ACT 3	ACT 4	ACT 5